One Hundredth

Anniversary

St. Mary's Church

Charlestown, Massachusetts

Montreal and Paris. As a native of Charlestown he was probably more agreeable to the inhabitants than a foreigner would have been, and his death, in 1847, was a misfortune to the town as well as to his flock.

In this year occurred a fresh spasm of the Know-Nothing spirit which had disgraced the locality in 1843. No popery flags were conspicuous in the Charlestown celebration of Bunker Hill Day, and a mob went so far as to stone St. Mary's.

Rev. P. F. Lyndon had been appointed successor to Father Goodwin. He improved the parish property during his pastorate of six years' duration, but its most memorable incident occurred in March of the closing year, when rumors of the abduction of Hannah Corcoran were spread abroad, and the Charlestown mob, inflamed by hand bills in the customary forms, came very near storming the house of the pastor of St. Mary's. The story of their reception has already been told in the general history of the archdiocese in the volume.

Rev. George A. Hamilton, who succeeded Father Lyndon, saw longer service in Charlestown than any who came either before or after him, and consequently identified himself more closely with the interests of the city. About the time of his coming a new parish was formed by Bishop Fitzpatrick, which included eight towns in Middlesex County, nearly all of which had been embraced in the original St. Mary's parish. This limitation of territory was conducive, of course, to greater intimacy between priests and people. Father Hamilton's death in 1874, at the age of sixty-two, was sincerely mourned. As an initiator of church works he occupied something of the position that was held by Father Fitton in East Boston and Rev. Manasses P. Dougherty in Cambridge.

Born in Missouri, of Maryland Catholic stock, he had served at St. Alban's, Vermont, and at Milford, before he came to Charlestown. Here his most substantial achievement was the building of St. Francis de Sales' church in 1859. At that time his flock numbered 9,500, and he deemed it advisable to make the division which has since resulted in giving three churches to the district.

Vicar-general Byrne was assigned to St. Mary's in 1874 and remained until 1880, when he assumed the presidency of Mount St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg. On June 6, 1875, he said the first Mass in the State Prison, being authorized to do so by a recent law. It was while he was pastor at St. Mary's, also, that Dr. Byrne was entrusted with the responsible position of vicar-general of the diocese.

The present pastor, Rev. John McMahon, D.D. is, like Father Goodwin, a native of Charlestown. His principal labor has been the erection of a larger church in place of the old chapel on what is now Rutherford Avenue, which, with various improvements and enlargements, has served the congregation for more than fifty years. October 29, 1887, he was able to lay the corner-stone of the new edifice on Warren Street, and October 2, 1892, to present it to the archbishop for dedication. On Sunday, May 28, 1899, it was consecrated with elaborate ceremonies.

(*continued*)

SAINT MARY'S CHURCH

Warren Street

Like St. Peter's, Dorchester, it discovers an uncommon amplitude in its interior, which is due to the absence of supporting columns. A mere suggestion of the division into nave and aisles is retained in the arrangement of the roof. The sanctuary is beautifully furnished and lighted. Stained glass windows on all sides tell the story of the Divine Maid of Nazareth, and the stations of the cross are of a rare pattern, being copies of those set up in the Cathedral at Hartford, where Dr. McMahon's brother was bishop until his death. The outside of the church is designed in the Gothic style. Rockport granite with brick trimmings produces a novel effect which, however, cannot be fully judged until the tower and steeple are completed.

Financially this old parish is in excellent condition. The former church is still standing, ready to be turned to new uses, and the parish owns other property.

It was in St. Mary's that John Boyle O'Reilly spent the latter years of his life, as a loyal parishoner. August 13, 1890, he was buried from the basement of the new church amid the tears of a gathering that far exceeded its capacity. Rev. Robert Fulton, S.J. spoke the customary words of sorrow and appreciation over his departed friend, but no voice could express the grief of the thousands who had personally known the sweetest spirit of his time.

Copied from Charlestown Enterprise

Saturday, May 27, 1899

The consecration of St. Mary's Church, which will take place to-morrow with due formality and with all the impressiveness that is given to such an important religious function, promises to be notable in the history of the parish and the diocese.

Old St. Mary's, as the mother parish of the district and one of the oldest in New England, has a history that is replete with lessons of toil and effort, of religious zeal and personal self-sacrifice.

For more than three score years and ten St. Mary's Church has had a part in the religious history of the town, city and district, and it is a part which every member of the parish in these days may well be proud of.

To-morrow, in a magnificent church which is free from debt, a new chapter in the record will be begun, and begun under auspices that promise still greater triumph and glory for the future. To none will the service bring greater joy and satisfaction than to the pastor whose hand has been upon the parish helm for more than seventeen years and who received his first spiritual instruction in the historic edifice which the present structure has replaced as a house of worship.

(*continued*)

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The Charlestown News

A Loyal Parish is His

Rev. John W. McMahon, D.D. was born in Charlestown, February 14, 1847. The parish records show that he was baptized by Rev. Michael Magrath on March 7 of that year. His parents were Owen and Sarah McMahon, respected residents of the old town. After completing the course in the Charlestown grammar and high schools he studied at Holy Cross College from 1863 to 1867, completing a five years' course of preparation at Rome and was ordained in the eternal city in May, 1872. His first assignment was to St. Stephen's Church, at the North End, where he remained as curate until his appointment as pastor of St. Mary's in the fall of 1881.

His duties from the time of his appointment to the present have been more than usually arduous, but a loyal parish is his, and it has followed him with implicit confidence in his discretion and ability. That confidence has been more than justified.

When he first took charge he found that the land upon which was erected the parochial residence on Washington Street had not been paid for, and one of his first duties was the payment of the mortgage note on that account.

He raised and expended about $8000 in repairing the old church on Rutherford Avenue, and paid $3600 to pew holders for relinquishing their titles to the pews in that church.

A Great Work Stages

Repairs, however, were not enough, and the pressing need of a larger and more substantial church had at last to be met. The pastor met it firmly and with characteristic breadth of vision. On April 14, 1885 the first important steps were taken when deeds were passed for 15,000 feet of land on Warren, Winthrop and Soley Streets. The price of the land alone was $32,000. Work on the foundations were begun in the same year, and on the 23d of October, 1887, the corner stone was laid.

On May 26, 1889, the first religious services were held in the basement, and ten years from that time marks the consecration of a magnificent edifice which represents a total expenditure of not less than $300,000.

For the first service Vicar General Byrne celebrated the Mass, and the sermon was preached by Rt. Rev. Lawrence S. McMahon, Bishop of Hartford and brother of the pastor. In the evening Rev. Thomas Magennis of Jamaica Plain officiated at solemn vesper service, and Rev. Father Dougherty of New York preached the sermon.

On Sunday, October 2, 1892, was held the dedicatory services, which were of memorable impressiveness and were conducted by Archbishop Williams. Bishop Harkins of Providence celebrated Mass and Rev. Dr. Henry Brann of New York preached the sermon. In the afternoon Rev.

(*continued*)

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Arthur Connolly preached a sermon. Bishop McMahon of Hartford officiated at the vesper service in the evening. The sermon was by Rev. D. L. O'Farrell.

A Task Completed

The new undertaking was not confined to the building a massive church edifice. The necessity for a parochial house in convenient proximity to the new parish church was early recognized, and the result was the acquisition and preparation for occupancy of the present parochial residence and adjoining land on Winthrop Street at the expense of $21,000. So zealously did the pastor work, and so unremittingly were his efforts, that his health gave way beneath the strain and for months he was compelled to suspend his duties and obtain complete respite. He did not yield, however, to the advice of the physicians and friends until the brunt of the burden had been disposed of and there was no doubt as to the future.

The financial part of the immense undertaking which to-morrow's services will stamp as complete was a mighty one, but it has been handled with rare skill and patience. It is not given to the pastor of every parish to see the work paid for and the last record of indebtedness wiped out within a decade after the dedicatory services. That this has been possible has been due in a marked degree to the loyalty of the laity—to the men and women who have for St. Mary's personal veneration and love.

The last debts were paid by the united efforts of such as these. A few of them gathered together, considered the situation, and saw that it was possible to free the church from debt by one of the characteristic efforts. There was a long pull, a strong pull and a pull all together, and the dearest wish of the pastor's heart had been accomplished. James Roughan led with a check for $1,000, P. O'Riordan gave $500, and others were not less liberal according to their means.

His Faithful Assistants

Record should be made of the fact that during the planning and the building, of progress and completion, the pastor has owed not a little to the work of his three assistants, Rev. William J. Millerick, Rev. James W. Allison and Rev. Philip J. Gormley. The routine work of the parish is exacting and it is increasing, but they have proved themselves to be representatives of the best type of curate—loyal, faithful, conscientious and helpful in the fullest sense of the word.

In the present status of St. Mary's Church—a status so solid and firm as the granite which forms part of the rugged exterior of the new church is found the justification of those who in the early days of Massachusetts Catholicism planted the grain of seed which has developed and grown with such amazing results.

(*continued*)

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From a quaint old church on a back street have gone forth gifted sons of the parish whose fame as sons of the church has become national, but none of that band has held a higher place in the hearts of the people of the parish and the district than the present pastor—a Charlestown boy and a St. Mary's boy, by birth, by training, and by a record that shall be undying.

Ceremony of Consecration

The consecration services begin at 7 A. M., the main body of the church being closed to the public. The early Masses will be celebrated in the basement.

The solemn ceremony of blessing the church inside and out is a lengthy one. Bishop Brady will officiate, Rev. W. J. Millerick and Rev. J. W. Allison will serve as deacons, Rev. John Harrigan as Sub-deacon, Rev. Thomas J. McCormick and Rev. Philip J. Gormley as masters of ceremonies. A procession of priests and altar boys will precede the bishop in his tour of the church.

Pontifical High Mass

Archbishop Williams will be celebrant of the pontifical high Mass at 10:15 o'clock, assisted by the Rev. William Byrne, V.G., D.D.; Very Rev. John Hogan, S.S., S.T.D., of St. John's Seminary, and Rev. Denis J. O'Farrell of St. Stephen's Church, deacons of honor; Rev. Joseph F. Mohan and Rev. William F. Powers, deacons. Rev. James Dougherty of the Drumgoole Mission, Lafayette Place, New York City, an effective speaker, will preach the sermon.

The chalice and the ciborium to be used at the services have historical associations, the former having been in use during the war service of the late Bishop McMahon, and the latter by the French priests in the American Revolution. A full set of altar linens made by Miss Mollie O'Reilly will be used for the first time. These cloths are of the finest Irish linen and are beautifully embroidered, Miss O'Reilly taking over a year to complete them. She has given them to the church in memory of her parents, John Boyle O'Reilly and Mary J. A. O'Reilly.

The Vesper Service

At the solemn musical vespers at 7 o'clock the celebrant will be Monsignor Thomas McGennis of Jamaica Plain; Rev. John Harrigan of St. Francis de Sales Church, Roxbury, deacon; Rev. Michael Crowley of Brockton, sub-deacon. Rev. Arthur T. Connolly of Roxbury will preach. The subject matter of his discourse will be of a historical nature, in connection with the progress of Catholicity in the diocese. Father Connolly is an eloquent speaker, and has for many years made a study of his subject, and there is every probability of a delightful treat in store for those who may attend.

(*continued*)

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The Musical Program

James M. McLaughlin, the organist will direct the singing, Emil Mollenhauer will lead the orchestra and John Watterson will preside at the organ. The Clover Glee Club and Boston Festival Orchestra will assist the choir of eighty voices. The soloists are Mrs. Julia A. Herrick, soprano; Mrs. Annette McMunn, contralto; Michael J. Dwyer, tenor; and A. De Andria, bass.

St. Mary's Richmond Street

The corner stone of old St. Mary's Church on Rutherford Avenue, then known as Richmond Street, was laid on October 3, 1828, and services were held for the first time May 10, 1829. The land cost $1569.20 and the edifice about $7,000. The original structure was 45 x 75 feet and stood back some distance from the street line. Services were at first conducted by clergymen from the Cathedral on Franklin Street, Boston and its suburbs being all one parish.

Rev. Patrick Byrne

In 1830 Bishop Fenwick made a separate parish of Charlestown and the adjacent territory to the north and west, appointing as its first pastor Rev. Patrick Byrne, who assumed charge of the parish July 18, 1820. Father Byrne remained as pastor until May 1843, when he was sent to New Bedford where he died in December of the following year.

Rev. George J. Goodwin

Rev. George J. Goodwin who had just been ordained to the priesthood succeeded Father Byrne and was the pastor until his death in September, 1847. He was born of Protestant parents. During his four years' pastorate he evidenced marked ability in his administration of the affairs of the parish, and had he lived it is fair to presume greater honors in the church would have come to him.

Father Goodwin was the fourth child of John and Polly Wellington Goodwin. The family migrated to Charlestown, Illinois, in 1837. His branch of the Goodwin family were residents of Charlestown as early as 1714. His grandfather was Deacon David Goodwin of the First Baptist Church, who built and lived in the commodious square house, 71 Washington Street, corner of Union—the house that stands back from the street on a high terrace. Deacon Goodwin has important town offices, was the builder of many houses in Charlestown, and the owner at the time of his death in January, 1825, of several estates on Washington and Main Streets. An uncle, Thomas Jenner Goodwin, owned and occupied the residence, 67 Union Street, corner of Washington Street. He conducted a retail and jobbing dry goods business in the store 11 Main Street, now occupied by George Wilson, was a leading man in town affairs, one of the members of the First Universalist Society, and afterward a member of the Unitarian Society.

(*continued*)

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Vicar General Lyndon

Rev. Patrick F. Lyndon, the late able vicar general, was pastor from September, 1857, until May, 1853. During these years the front of the church was extended to the street line, the basement was built and the pastoral residence in the rear part of the church edifice was remodeled.

Pastor for Twenty-one Years

Rev. George A. Hamilton was the pastor from August, 1853 until July, 1874, with the exception of the period from 1862 to 1866 when Rev. Emiliano Grebi, O.S.F. was the administrator during the temporary absence of Father Hamilton, who was giving all his time to the new St. Francis de Sales' Church. During Father Emiliano's administration he had as assistants Father Bonaventure, Father Gilberti and other priests of the Franciscan order. In 1862 Father Hamilton took up his residence in the parochial house on Bunker Hill Street and in 1866 returned to St. Mary's where he lived until his death July 31, 1874.

During his pastorate additional land was bought, the basement was enlarged, the church repainted and frescoed and the handsome parochial house on Washington Street was erected. On June 23, 1859, was begun the excavating for the new St. Francis de Sales' Church, September 11 of that year the corner stone was laid, and Mass was celebrated for the first time June 16, 1861. Father Hamilton was pastor of the two churches until the division of Charlestown into two parishes in 1868.

Vicar General Byrne

The present vicar general of the achdiocese, the Very William Byrne, now pastor of St. Joseph's Church, was assigned to St. Mary's Church, September 7, 1874, remaining here until 1881. He was made vicar general July 15, 1878. During his pastorate here he was called to the presidency of Mt. St. Mary's College at Emmitsburg, Maryland, in order that that institution might have the benefit of his high administrative ability.

Former Curates

In the earlier years of St. Mary's the pastors were not provided with curates and they had to perform all the duties connected with the parish work, having the assistance occasionally of a visiting priest. Later with the increase of number of priests in the diocese, curates were appointed to assist the pastor.

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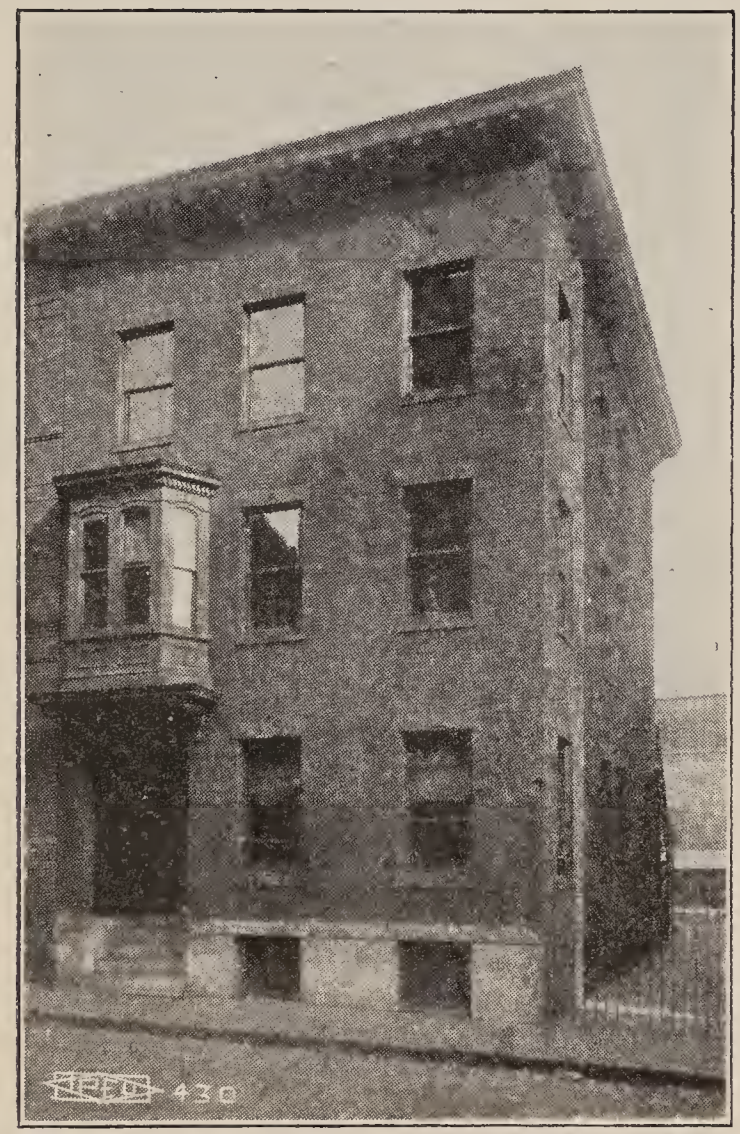

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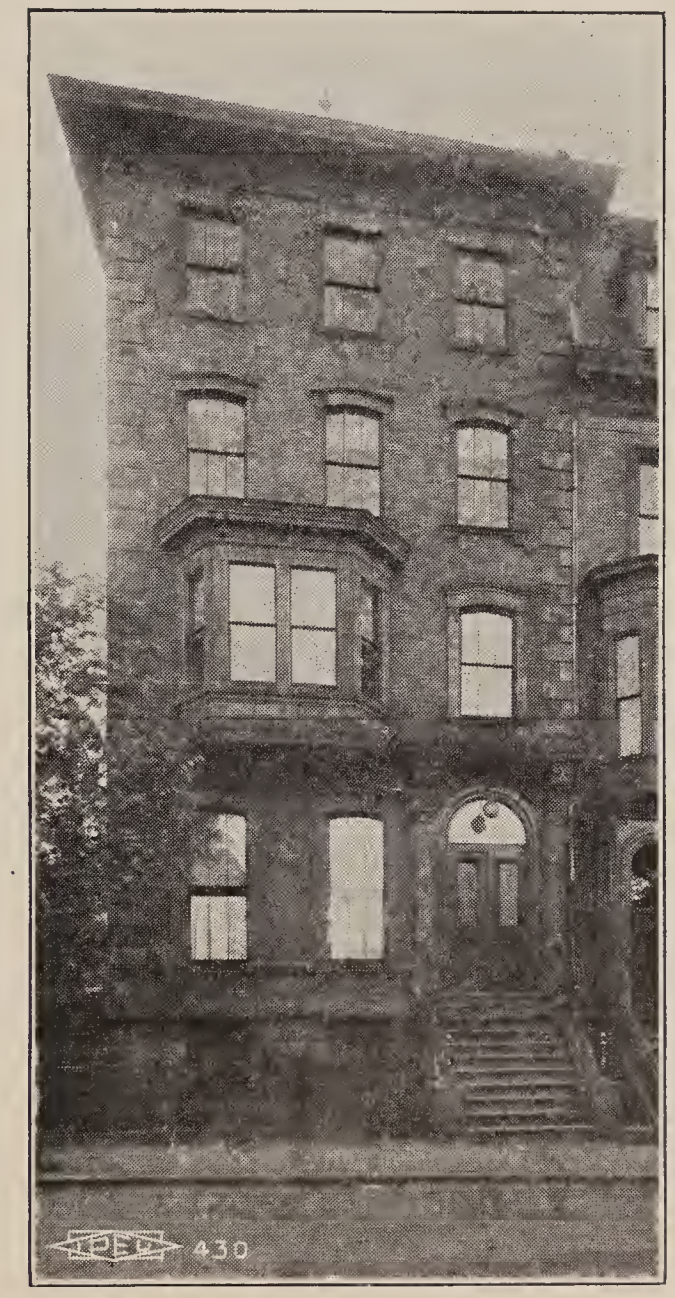

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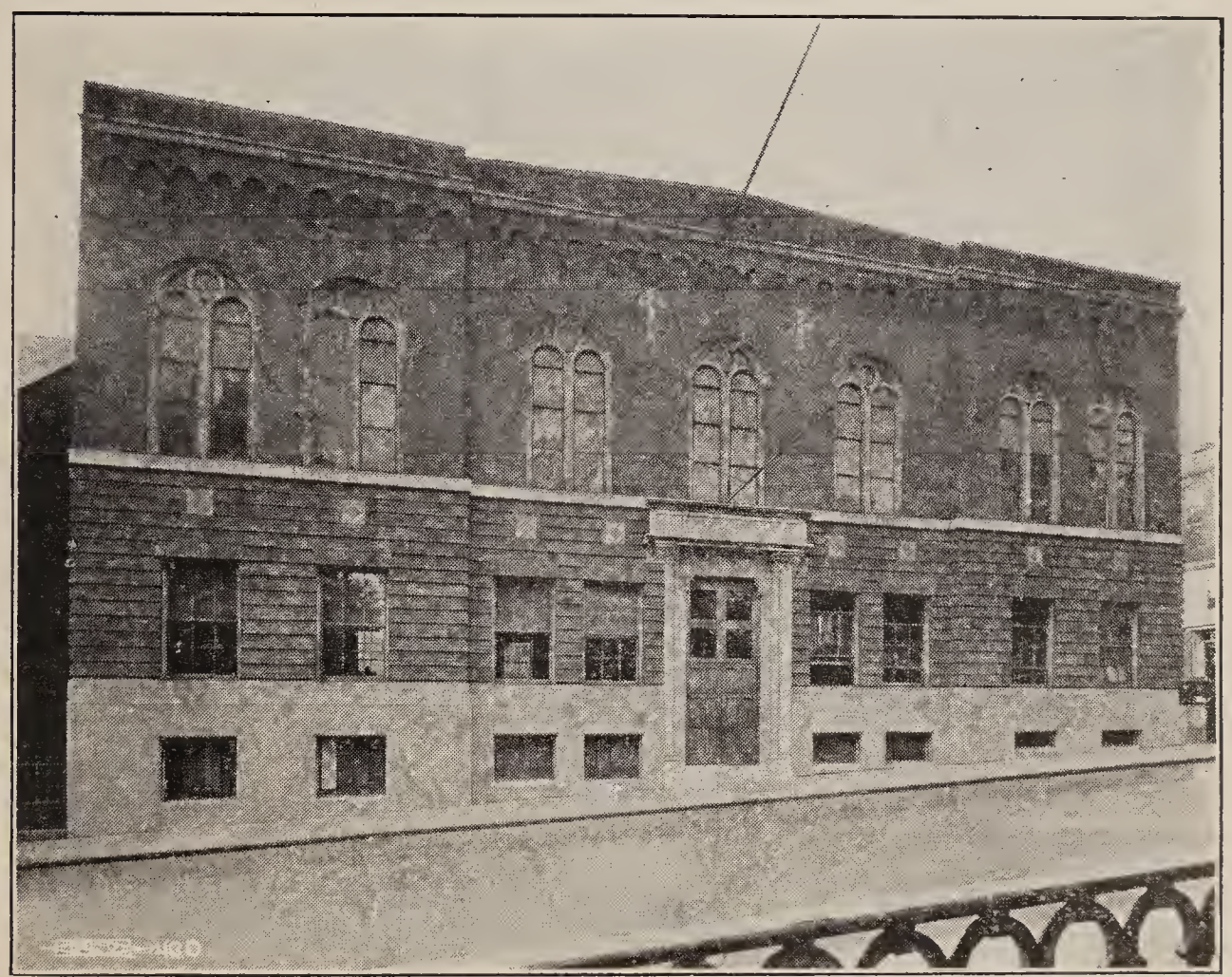

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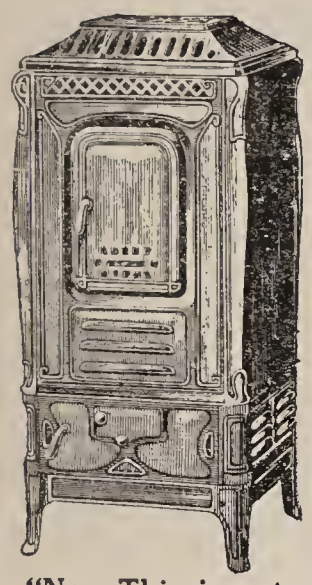

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